

Elite Opponents

Weird and "Wonderful" Stirges

Creature Incarnations
By Robert Wiese



Almost every adventurer fights stirges at some point in his career. Although individually weak, a storm of such creatures strikes terror into the hearts of their prey and can kill all but the toughest hero. They are, though, one of the only creatures in the *Monster Manual* not to have an advancement progression listed. Thus, when you fight a stirge you pretty much know what you are facing.



So, when fighting stirges, successful adventurers should keep their relative strengths and weaknesses in mind.

Stirges have good Listen and Spot checks (both +4) and darkvision and low-light vision, making them difficult to sneak up on or elude. They also have a fly speed of 40 feet (with average maneuverability), which gives them a great advantage over land-bound opponents.

On average, however, stirges have low hit points (5) and a moderate Armor Class (16) making them relatively easy to kill. Of note is their touch Armor Class (16) which is actually pretty good (for a touch Armor Class). Thus, rays and touch attack spells are no more effective against them than normal. As Tiny creatures, they do not threaten the squares around them and they must actually enter a character's square to attack (which provokes an attack of opportunity). Also, once they fly away they provoke another attack of opportunity as they leave their victim's square. Even the withdraw option does not help them avoid this because leaving the adjacent square also provokes an attack of opportunity.

For more information on stirges, be sure to consult the Tactics & Tips: [Know Your Enemy](#), on these pesky critters. Design info on the stirges mini, in the *War of the Dragon Queen* set, can be read in [Preview 9](#).

Once they have attached themselves to their victim, however, they suck its blood, potentially reducing a target's Constitution by up to 4 points (which also results in hit point loss, of course). When a character's Constitution score reaches 0, he dies. This makes stirges particularly dangerous in large groups because a character's Constitution score does not rise as rapidly as his hit point total.

An average stirge has the following statistics:

Stirge CR 1/2

N **Tiny magical beast**

Init +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Listen +4, Spot +4

Languages --

AC 16, touch 16, **flat-footed** 12

(+2 size, +4 Dex)

hp 5 (1 HD)

Fort +2, **Ref** +6, **Will** +1

Speed 10 ft. (2 squares), fly 40 ft. (average)

Melee touch +7 (attach)

Space 2-1/2 ft.; **Reach** 0 ft.

Base Atk +11; **Grp** -11 (+1 when attached)

Atk Options attach, blood drain

Abilities **Str** 3, **Dex** 19, **Con** 10, **Int** 1, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 6

Feats Alertness, Weapon Finesse[B]

Skills Hide +14, Listen +4, Spot +4

Attach (Ex) If a stirge hits with a touch attack, it uses its eight pincers to latch onto the opponent's body. An attached stirge is effectively grappling its prey. The stirge loses its Dexterity bonus to AC and has an AC of 12, but holds on with great tenacity. Stirges have a +12 racial bonus on grapple checks (already figured into the Base Attack/Grapple entry above). An attached stirge can be struck with a weapon or grappled itself. To remove an attached stirge through grappling, the opponent must achieve a pin against the stirge.

Blood Drain (Ex) A stirge drains blood, dealing 1d4 points of Constitution damage in any round when it begins its turn attached to a victim. Once it has dealt 4 points of Constitution damage, it detaches and flies off to digest the meal. If its victim dies before the stirge's appetite has been sated, the stirge detaches and seeks a new target.

The three template stirges below are somewhat different from their normal brethren, however. Each stirge is presented with a full stat block and brief notes on its habitat and combat tactics. The three stirges provide a significantly different challenge than that posed by their normal counterparts:

- The ghost brute stirge (CR 2) was driven to return from death by an unquenchable thirst for warm blood, and it single-mindedly searches for victims to sate its terrible cravings.
 - The two-headed half-green dragon stirge (CR 6) ranges widely through its sunken forest home using its potent breath weapons to subdue its prey before feasting on blood.
 - Flocks of voidmind stirges (each CR 1) search lightless passages for succulent brains to sate its mind flayer masters' disguising appetites. A flock of eight such creatures (EL 7) provides a serious challenge for mid-level parties delving too deeply into the eternal night of the Underdark.
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Ghost Brute Stirge

This ghostly, translucent creature seems to be a combination of bat and giant mosquito. It has membranous bat wings, a short furry body, eight jointed legs that end in sharp pincers, and a needlelike proboscis.

Ghost Brute* Stirge CR 2

* See *Libris Mortis* 103

N Tiny undead (incorporeal, augmented)

Init +6 ; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Listen +12, Spot +12

Languages --

AC 18, touch 18, flat-footed 12 (ethereal) or

19, touch 19, flat-footed 13 (manifested)

(+2 size, +6 Dex, +1 deflection)

hp 12 (1 HD)

Miss Chance 50% incorporeal

Immune mind-affecting effects, poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, disease, death effects, critical hits, nonlethal

damage, ability drain, energy drain, damage to physical ability scores, fatigue, exhaustion, any effect requiring a Fort save unless it is harmless or works on objects, death from massive damage

Resist turn +2

Fort +2, **Ref** +8, **Will** +1

Speed 10 ft. (2 squares), fly 40 ft. (perfect)

Melee bite +9 (1d6 negative energy) (ethereal) or incorporeal touch +9 (1d6 negative energy) (manifested) or touch +9 (attach) (ethereal) or

Ranged touch +9 (1d6 negative energy) (manifested or ethereal)

Space 2-1/2 ft.; **Reach** 0 ft.

Base Atk +1; **Grp** -9 (+3 when attached)

Atk Options attach, blood drain, slaving doom

Abilities Str 6, Dex 23, Con --, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 12

SQ manifestation, rejuvenation

Feats Alertness, Weapon Finesse[B]

Skills Hide +24, Listen +12, Search +4, Spot +12

Attach (Ex) If a ghost brute stirge hits with a touch attack, it uses its eight pincers to latch onto the opponent's body. An attached stirge is effectively grappling its prey. The stirge loses its Dexterity bonus to AC and has an AC of 12, but holds on with great tenacity. Stirges have a +12 racial bonus on grapple checks (already figured into the Base Attack/Grapple entry above). An attached stirge can be struck with a weapon or grappled itself. To remove an attached stirge through grappling, the opponent must achieve a pin against the stirge.

Blood Drain (Ex) A ghost brute stirge drains blood, dealing 1d4 points of Constitution damage in any round when it begins its turn attached to a victim. Once it has dealt 4 points of Constitution damage, it detaches and flies off to digest the meal. If its victim dies before the stirge's appetite has been sated, the stirge detaches and seeks a new target.

Slaving Doom (Su) A ghost brute stirge's proboscis drips a glowing ectoplasmic drool that exists in both ethereal and corporeal forms. The ectoplasm dissipates on contact with nonliving material, but if it touches a living being, that opponent must make a successful Fortitude save or take 1d6 points of negative energy damage.

Rejuvenation (Su) A destroyed ghost brute stirge returns to its old haunt in 2d4 days with a successful level check (1d20+1) against DC 16. The only definitive way to destroy a ghost brute stirge is to bathe its corporeal remains in warm blood.

When particularly vicious stirges die from lack of blood, they form ghost brute stirges. Tormented by the gnawing pain of extreme hunger, they are compelled to return to their place of death in an eternal hunt for warm blood. Once they have sighted prey, they stalk the unfortunate, attacking until slain. Their hunger is insatiable.

They cannot use their blood drain ability on nonethereal opponents and this knowledge (dimly realized) drives them into a wild frenzy of killing. (If faced with an ethereal opponent, they concentrate on that individual using attach and blood drain to the exclusion of all other abilities.) In battle, they use their slaving doom ability to strike foes from range, attacking until slain. Ghost brute stirges use very simple, straightforward tactics; they do not have the intellect to coordinate their attacks. They do not retreat from battle.

Two-Headed Half-Green Dragon Stirge

This foul-looking, two-headed creature seems to be a combination of bat and giant mosquito. It has

membranous bat wings, a short scaly body, and eight jointed legs that end in sharp pincers. Its two heads each sport a long, needlelike proboscis.

Two-Headed* Half-Green Dragon Stirge CR 6

* See *Savage Species* 124

LE Tiny dragon

Init +11; **Senses** darkvision 90 ft., low-light vision; Listen +11, Spot +11

Languages --

AC 23, touch 28, flat-footed 17

(+2 size, +6 Dex, +5 natural)

hp 34 (3 HD)

Immune acid, *sleep*, paralysis

Fort +6, **Ref** +9, **Will** +2

Speed 10 ft. (2 squares), fly 40 ft. (average)

Melee touch +11 (attach) and

bite +11 (1d3+2) and

2 claws each +11 (1d2+1) or

2 bites each +11 (1d3+2) and

2 claws each +11 (1d2+1) or

Ranged touch +9 (1d6 negative energy) (manifested or ethereal)

Space 2-1/2 ft.; **Reach** 0 ft.

Base Atk +3; **Grp** -3 (+9 when attached)

Atk Options Combat Reflexes, attach, blood drain

Special Actions breath weapon

Abilities Str 14, Dex 23, Con 17, Int 4, Wis 12, Cha 6

SQ dragon traits, redundant head

Feats Ability Focus (breath weapon), Alertness, Combat Reflexes[B], Improved Initiative [B], Improved Multiattack[B]*, Weapon Finesse[B]

Skills Hide +20, Listen +11, Search -1, Spot +11

Attach (Ex) If a two-headed half-green dragon stirge hits with a touch attack, it uses its eight pincers to latch onto the opponent's body. An attached stirge is effectively grappling its prey. The stirge loses its Dexterity bonus to AC and has an AC of 17, but holds on with great tenacity. Stirges have a +12 racial bonus on grapple checks (already figured into the Base Attack/Grapple entry above). An attached stirge can be struck with a weapon or grappled itself. To remove an attached stirge through grappling, the opponent must achieve a pin against the stirge.

Blood Drain (Ex) A two-headed half-green stirge drains blood, dealing 1d4 points of Constitution damage in any round when it begins its turn attached to a victim. Once it has dealt 4 points of Constitution damage, it detaches and flies off to digest the meal. If its victim dies before the stirge's appetite has been sated, the stirge detaches and seeks a new target.

Breath Weapon (Su) 30-ft. cone, 1/day, 6d8 acid, Reflex 16 half. A two-headed half-green dragon stirge has

two breath weapons; both activate on the same round but can aim in different directions.

Redundant Head (Ex) A two-headed half-green dragon stirge is not slain when only one head is severed.

* See *Draconomicon* 70

Two-headed half-green dragon stirges dwell deep in fetid, impassable swamp forests on small tree-shrouded hillocks. Solitary creatures, they viciously attack any creatures larger than them that enter their territory.

Two-headed half-green dragon stirges usually start combat by using their breath weapons, catching as many opponents within the affected area as possible. In subsequent rounds, they drain the blood of unconscious or dead opponents before flying off to digest their food. If forced into protracted combat, they use their claws and bite to deadly effect, concentrating on a single foe. Often, these creatures wait until intruders reach a patch of comparatively dry land. In this way, if their breath weapon kills the prey, they can feed for several days on the corpses.

Voidmind Stirge

This foul-looking creature seems to be a combination of bat and giant mosquito. It has membranous bat wings, a short furry body, eight jointed legs that end in sharp pincers, and a needlelike proboscis. Four small holes, bunged up with dabs of moist mucous, pierce its head. A small amount of sluggishly greenish fluid leaks from these holes.

Voidmind* Stirge CR 1

* See *Monster Manual III* 187

LE Tiny magical beast

Init +7; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Listen +4, Spot +4

Languages --

AC 23, touch 19, flat-footed 16

(+2 size, +7 Dex, +4 natural)

hp 15 (1 HD); **DR** 5/magic

Immune acid, mind-affecting spells and abilities, ability damage, ability drain, energy drain

SR 11

Fort +7, **Ref** +9, **Will** +1

Speed 10 ft. (2 squares), fly 40 ft. (average)

Melee touch +10 (attach) and

tentacle +10 (1d3) and

Space 2-1/2 ft.; **Reach** 0 ft. (5 ft. with tentacle)

Base Atk +1; **Grp** -7 (-3 with tentacle) (+5 when attached)

Atk Options Combat Reflexes, attach, blood drain, sentient tentacle

Special Actions cone of slime 1/day, constrict, improved grab

Abilities Str 10, Dex 25, Con 17, Int 4, Wis 12, Cha 2

SQ mind flayer host

Feats Alertness, Combat Reflexes[B], Great Fortitude[B], Weapon Finesse[B]

Skills Bluff +0, Escape Artist +11, Hide +17, Intimidate +0, Listen +4, Spot +4

Attach (Ex) If a voidmind stirge hits with a touch attack, it uses its eight pincers to latch onto the opponent's body. An attached stirge is effectively grappling its prey. The stirge loses its Dexterity bonus to AC and has an AC of 16, but holds on with great tenacity. Stirges have a +12 racial bonus on grapple checks (already figured

into the Base Attack/Grapple entry above). An attached stirge can be struck with a weapon or grappled itself. To remove an attached stirge through grappling, the opponent must achieve a pin against the stirge.

Blood Drain (Ex) A voidmind stirge drains blood, dealing 1d4 points of Constitution damage in any round when it begins its turn attached to a victim. Once it has dealt 4 points of Constitution damage, it detaches and flies off to digest the meal. If its victim dies before the stirge's appetite has been sated, the stirge detaches and seeks a new target.

Cone of Slime (Su) As a standard action a voidmind stirge can expel psionically charged slime in a 30 ft. cone dealing 1d6 points of damage (DC 14 Reflex save halves). Any creature taking damage from the slime takes a -2 penalty on its Will save and is stunned for 1d4+1 rounds (DC 14 Fortitude save negates the stun).

Constrict (Ex) A voidmind stirge deals 1d3 points of damage with a successful grapple check from its tentacle attack.

Improved Grab (Ex) To use this ability the voidmind stirge must hit an opponent of up to Tiny size with a tentacle attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If the voidmind stirge wins the grapple, it establishes a hold and can constrict.

Sentient Tentacle (Ex) A voidmind stirge's tentacle attacks of its own accord. The creature can direct it to attack certain targets without hindering its other combat abilities.

Mind Flayer Host (Su) A voidmind stirge's masters (the three mind flayers who created it) are instantly aware if the voidmind stirge takes any damage, wanders out of range, or is targeted by magic. The masters can, as a standard action, see and hear through the voidmind stirge's eyes and ears up to a range of five miles. Any one of its three masters can take control of a voidmind stirge, at will, as the *dominate monster* spell (no save). While controlling the voidmind stirge in this manner, the mind flayer can manifest its own innate psionic abilities through the voidmind stirge. Any of the mind flayer's psionic powers can target or affect creatures within range, line of sight, and line of effect of the voidmind creature.

Mind flayers use voidmind stirges as useful aerial guards for their lairs or as a screen of scouts as they explore the Underdark for prey. A voidmind stirge's mind flayer masters use their link with their minion to direct battle and to subdue opponents with their own prodigious psionic abilities. Often they use packs of voidmind stirges to bring down particularly numerous or tough foes before feasting on their fresh brains.

In combat, if directed by its master, a voidmind stirge stays airborne, which allows the mind flayer to use its psionic attacks to incapacitate opponents. If fighting under its own volition, it uses its cone of slime ability to soften up opponents before attempting to attach and drain blood. Whenever engaged in actual melee, a voidmind stirge also uses its tentacle to attack nearby characters.

Feedback

Have any scary stories about stirge attacks or do you have cool stirge-defeating tactic? Let us know via dndfeedback@wizards.com.

About the Author

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Andrew Maguire, who first coined the phrase, "watch out -- Creighton's been at the templates again!" Creighton can be reached at creighton@greyworks.co.uk.

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